

TRAINING FOR KID AZTEC

I was a young guy in Los Angeles.
there were these little bars
around the Plaza. small Mexican
bars. and there was this large
one. well-frequented. that I
started the night out in
but it was too mellow
full of decent working types
so I got out
found a winding little alley.
dark
and I followed it down
switchblade in pocket.
I found this little bar
at the alley's end
went in
sat on a stool and ordered a
bottle of beer.
there were 4 Mexicans in there
including the bartender
and I sat looking straight
ahead
lifting my beer now and
then

I was a crazy son of a bitch
ready to go all the way
better not to fuck
with me ...

I finished the bottle
ordered another.

"where the hell are your
women?" I asked.

no answer.

"I shouldn't be in here,"
I stated, "I'm training for a
fight at the Olympic, a four-
rounder. I'm fighting Kid
Aztec"

silence.

I got off my stool, stood
up, sneered, "anybody here want
to spar a little, huh?"

no answer.

I put a coin in the
juke box.
the music came on and

I shadow boxed to the
tune of it.

when the piece was
finished I sat down and
ordered another beer.

"I'm a killer," I told
the barkeep, "a born
killer ... I'm sorry for
Kid Aztec"

the barkeep took my
money, rang it into the
register
his back toward me.

I said to his
back: "on top of
everything. I'm a
writer.
I write short stories,
novels, poems,
essays"

"Señor, you write
poems?" asked a big
Mexican at the end of the
bar.

"shit, yes ... I write
sonnets"

"what do you write these
sonnets about?"

"love"

"oh, love, Señor?"

"love sonnets to
Death"

I drained my bottle,
ordered another.

"I write too,
Señor"

"oh yeah?"

"oh yes. I stick my instrument into
women and I write
inside of them."

the other Mexicans
laughed.
I waited until they were
finished.

"you guys are fools. you
laugh like fools!"

"maybe so. Señor. but even fools
have a right to laugh.
no?"

I peeled the label off
my beer. stuck it face down on
the bar. finished
off the bottle.

"another beer. Señor?" asked
the barkeep.

"naw. that's enough. I got to
get my rest"

I walked toward the
exit.

"good luck with your fight with
Kid Aztec. Señor." somebody
said

I walked down the little
alley. stopped to puke in a
dark corner. finished. walked
out on the street
looking for a sonnet. a better
bar. something.
anything.

I had only bored them with
my dangerousness.

all the nights were the
same and the days were
worse.

I stood under a tree at
the edge of the Plaza
lighting a cigarette and
trying to look like a
killer.

nobody noticed.

I had held the match
too long. it burned my
fingers.
I cursed loudly. stepped
out and began walking
toward the train
station

somebody had told me
that the hookers were
sucking them right off the
loading ramps

ZERO

the consensus is that it's a difficult time.
perhaps the most:
large gatherings of people in cities
all over the world
protesting that they'd rather not be
blown to shit.

but whoever's in control
will not listen.
the suggestion is that, of course, it's
only power fighting power
and the power, of course, is in the hands
of the few who run the nations
and their need is to protect something
beyond the many people.

it is conceivable that these few
will escape
when the final blasting begins;
they will escape in their space craft
where they will notate and watch
the display to its finish,
and then after a reasonable wait
they will return to the
safe regions
where they will again begin building
another ridiculous and
incompetent future

... which, to me, is not a very
glamorous thought
while opening a can of beer
on a hot
July night.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA